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Correspondence, John C. Stennis, February 12-19, 1948

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[REDACTED]
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
[REDACTED]

JACKSON 102, MISSISSIPPI

February 12, 1948

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R.
R.
E, JR.

FEB 16 1948

Honorable John C. Stennis
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Stennis:

At a meeting of the Jackson Junior Bar Association, Jackson, Mississippi, held February 2, 1948, a Resolution was adopted with regard to the so-called "Civil Rights legislation" recommended by President Truman, and I was directed, as President of said group, to send a copy of said Resolution to you. Said copy is attached hereto.

It is the feeling of our group and of everyone to whom I have talked relative to this matter, that we should not retreat one step from the stand that has been taken by Governor Wright and Senator Eastland, let the chips fall where they may.

With kindest personal regards
of the writer, I beg to remain

Respectfully yours,

[REDACTED]
E

Jackson Junior Bar Association

EWV:raf
Enc. - 1.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS in recent years, the traditions, customs and sovereign rights of the Southern States have been threatened and encroachments thereupon made; and

WHEREAS on December 5, 1946, President Harry S. Truman, the leader of the National Democratic Party, appointed a committee known as the President's Committee on Civil Rights, which Committee allegedly made a study and submitted a report commonly known as the Civil Rights Report; and

WHEREAS such Report contains drastic recommendations which are inimical to the best interests of that section of the United States known as the South and to the best interests of the Nation as a whole; and

WHEREAS said Report was not only received by President Truman but was subsequently endorsed en toto by him in his "State of the Union" speech to the Congress of the United States on January 7, 1948, in which speech said President urged said Congress to pass legislation to carry out and effectuate the recommendations contained in the aforementioned Report; and

WHEREAS the Honorable James O. Eastland, a Senator from the Sovereign State of Mississippi, rose on the floor of the United States Senate on January 16, 1948, and warned the National Democratic Party that the Southern delegates to the Democratic National Convention would not support any candidate "whose philosophy of government would destroy our social institutions"; and

WHEREAS the Honorable Fielding L. Wright, Governor of the Sovereign State of Mississippi, in his Inaugural Address on January 20, 1948, decried the aforementioned attitude and action of the leader of the National Democratic Party, asserting in part as follows, to-wit:

"In Mississippi, and I think in the other states known as the South, we feel that our rights are being threatened by enemies of the South who are in fact also enemies of the nation. We are convinced that in upholding

our position in this current struggle, we are in fact maintaining the interests of all the American people and each of the forty-eight states. Yes, we are confident that we are by our position upholding the rights of the members of all races and sections.

As a life-long Democrat, as a descendant of Democrats, as the Governor of this nation's most Democratic State, I would regret to see the day come when Mississippi or the South should break with the Democratic party in the national election. But vital principles and eternal truths transcend party lines, and the day is now at hand when determined action must be taken.

We have repeatedly seen the proposal of various measures in the Congress which were definitely designed to appeal to certain voting groups holding the balance of power in other States. We of the South will no longer tolerate being the target for this type of legislation which would not only destroy our way of life, but which, if enacted, would eventually destroy the United States. The time has come for the militant people of the South and the nation, who have never shirked any patriotic responsibility, to band together for the preservation of true Americanism. United in our cause, we serve not only ourselves and our neighbors, but all of our fellow citizens throughout the nation."

"This is a new day in state and national politics, and circumstances may make necessary a new, and, we hope, a temporary approach to national politics by our State and Southland. We have always remained true to the traditions of our Party, and will continue to do so, but when the national leaders attempt to change those principles for which the party stands, we intend to fight for its preservation with all means at our hands. We must make our national leaders fully realize we mean precisely what we say, and we must, if necessary, implement our words with positive action. We warn them now, to take heed. Drastic though our methods may be, and as far-reaching as the results may prove, we are certain that the ultimate consequence will fully justify any temporary set-back that may follow our action."; and

WHEREAS the Legislature of the Sovereign State of Mississippi in regular session duly assembled did, on January 22, 1948, unanimously approve and endorse the stand taken by Governor Fielding L. Wright, saying in part as follows, to-wit:

"We join the governor in the warning given to the leaders of the National Democratic Party and to the nation, that Mississippians and Southerners will no longer tolerate these abuses and efforts to destroy the South and her institutions and hereby pledge our full support to the governor in his efforts to protect and uphold the principles, traditions and way of life of our beloved Southland.";

and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the objections voiced and the warnings given as above mentioned, said President Harry S. Truman did, on February 2, 1948, in utter disregard of the known sentiments of the people of the Southern States, submit a strongly worded message to the Congress of the United States, in which message he again urged specifically the passage of so-called "civil rights legislation" inimical to the interests of the South and of the nation as a whole; and

WHEREAS the members of the Jackson Junior Bar Association of Jackson, Mississippi, concur wholeheartedly with the sentiments expressed by Senator James O. Eastland and by Governor Fielding L. Wright as hereinbefore set forth, and feel that the hour has arrived to take the "positive action" threatened in the aforesaid Governor's Address;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Jackson Junior Bar Association go on record as urging the Democratic Executive Committee of Mississippi and the Mississippi Legislature to consider and take whatever steps are necessary toward the effectuation of the warnings heretofore given by Senator James O. Eastland and Governor Fielding L. Wright to the National Democratic Party:

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the Jackson Junior Bar Association be directed to send a copy of this Resolution to the following persons:

Governor Fielding L. Wright
Senator James O. Eastland
Senator John C. Stennis
The Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives
The President of the Mississippi Senate
Each Representative from Mississippi in the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States
Each member of the Democratic Executive Committee of Mississippi
The Chairman of the Junior Bar Section of the American Bar Association;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the Jackson Junior Bar Association be directed to send a copy of this Resolution to the Chairman of the Junior Bar Section of each of the Southern States, and to the President of each of the

local Junior Bar Associations throughout the Southern States,
together with an appropriate letter that similar sentiments be
expressed by those groups to their political leaders, and that
similar "positive action" be encouraged by them.

C. WAYLAND BROOKS, ILL., CHAIRMAN
KENNETH S. WHERRY, NEBR.
BOURNE S. HICKEL-LOOPER, IOWA
WILLIAM F. KNOWLAND, CALIF.
HENRY CABOT LODGE, JR., MASS.
WILLIAM E. JENNER, IND.
JOHN W. BRICKER, OHIO
IRVING M. IVES, N. Y.
CARL HAYDEN, ARIZ.
THEODORE FRANCES GREEN, R. I.
BRIEN MC MAHON, CONN.
FRANCIS J. MYERS, PA.
JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS.

ALBERT L. SIOEL, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

February 19, 1948

Civil Rights

Hon. [REDACTED]

Jackson, Mississippi

Dear [REDACTED]:

I appreciate very much your letter of February 12th with the enclosed resolution which has had my close attention. It has much valuable thought therein and I certainly appreciate your sending me the copy.

I have always been a strong States' Rights man and have known in a general way that we were developing a more centralized form of government, but I have really been amazed after getting here at the extent of this development.

As I stated at the meeting in Jackson last Thursday, the things that have impressed me most here in Washington have been the lack of regard for the rights of the states and the far-reaching influence of the organized pressure groups that constantly operate here, and most effectively. We are in the midst of these battles here now, with the outcome of course uncertain, but my belief is that not a single one of them will become a law.

I am enclosing herewith a four-paragraph quotation from a letter that I wrote immediately on my return from Mississippi.

I am working my way into the active and fighting part of the picture here as fast as I can, and at the same time trying to avoid a mis-step that would lessen my chances on being taken seriously by my colleagues. I shall deeply appreciate your counsel and suggestions from time to time and shall also remember you most kindly and most favorably because of your very generous treatment and timely help in the campaign last fall.

With best wishes and warm personal regards, I am

Your friend,

U. S. S.

JCS:eh
Enc.